

## Introduction and Welcome!

I write this Update as the winds from Storm Dudley ease. I watch with trepidation the weather warnings relating to Storm Eunice. By the time this update is sent out, I fear the storm's destructive power will have been felt. On this point, our Emergency Planning Team, Highways Service, and front-line staff are all preparing themselves for what the storm may bring. I thank colleagues for the concern and dedication that I know they will show as they have done before. You can stay abreast of any local impact to public services either via the Council's [Twitter feed](#) or [website](#).

By the time you read this Update, the outcome of the Oundle by-election and the Cottingham neighbourhood planning referendum will be known. I have provided more information on how you can find out about the results further below.

I am delighted to welcome Clr Helen Howell to this Update, who will be providing updates on preparations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee between now and the events themselves.

Next Tuesday, the meeting of the Executive will take place. We will consider a number of important reports but one I particularly wanted to highlight was a report on the future of garden waste collections. The report looks at how the Council can harmonize the kerbside garden waste service across the area. If the recommendations of the report are agreed at the meeting, a public consultation will be carried out with the results reported back to Executive in July this year.

The other major event to mention, of course, is the Council's proposed budget for 2022/23 that will be debated at Full Council next Thursday (24 February). We are also aiming to live stream this meeting, something that has been suggested by followers of the Council's Twitter feed on numerous occasions, so you should be able to watch it from the comfort of your own home or office. I have provided more information on this below too and look forward to seeing fellow Members and public speakers at the meeting next week.

## Executive meeting

The next Executive meeting is scheduled to take place at 10am on Tuesday 22 February in the Council Chamber at Corby Cube. You can find the [agenda and reports](#) for this meeting online, as well as the [papers](#) from the 10 February meeting.



## Council budget meeting

As reported in my last Update, the final budget proposals for North Northamptonshire Council for the next financial year will be presented at the authority's Full Council meeting next week.

The **budget report** explains that the Council is working hard to protect vital services while, at the same time, presenting a balanced budget, with a net revenue budget of £295.9million for 2022-2023.

This funding provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the disposal and collection of waste, household waste recycling, economic development, housing and support for homeless people.

The budget further develops firm financial foundations for the Council as it settles into its second year following the reorganisation of local government in Northamptonshire.

Proposals set out in the budget report focus on further transformation of services as well as developing policies around the authority's Corporate Plan.

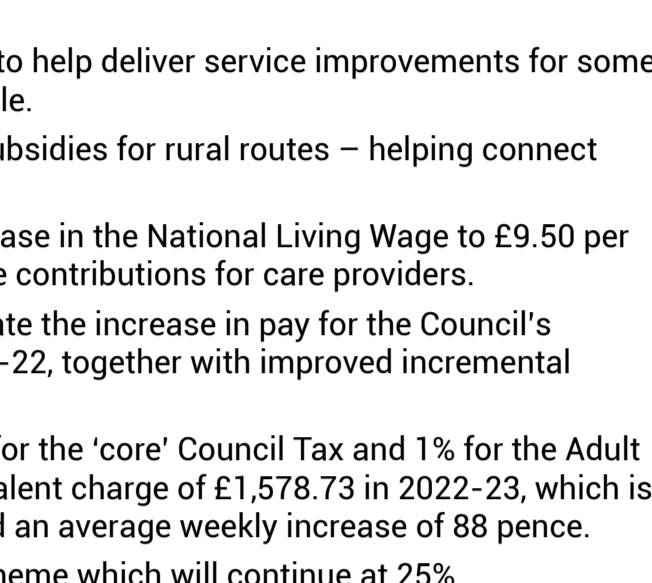
Some of the headlines from the budget include:

1. The Council's commitment to tackling the effects of climate change is emphasised with a dedicated pot of £1 million over the next three years to be invested in moving towards being a carbon neutral organisation.
2. Investing in Northamptonshire Children's Trust to help deliver service improvements for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
3. The authority is proposing to reintroduce bus subsidies for rural routes – helping connect communities and reduce car journeys.
4. Investment in Social Care to recognise the increase in the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour and a 1.25% increase in National Insurance contributions for care providers.
5. An investment of £0.8m recurringly to consolidate the increase in pay for the Council's lower paid staff to the Real Living Wage in 2021-22, together with improved incremental progression.
6. An increase in Council Tax consisting of 1.99% for the 'core' Council Tax and 1% for the Adult Social Care precept, resulting in a Band D equivalent charge of £1,578.73 in 2022-23, which is an annual increase of £45.83 from 2021-22, and an average weekly increase of 88 pence.
7. No change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%.
8. Inclusion of a contingency to mitigate against future uncertainty.
9. Continuing efforts to seek efficiencies in order to help address the budget requirement from 2023-24.

North Northamptonshire Council's budget sets out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2022-2023 as well as outlining the medium-term financial plan for the next two years.

While the Council is in a stable position now, it is recognised that the Covid pandemic has had a profound effect on societies and economies around the world and this presents some uncertainty in the medium term. The Council believes that by being prudent it can be in the best position possible as it moves forward.

Watch the meeting live on the [North Northamptonshire Council YouTube channel](#).



## Results of the Oundle election

This morning, the results of the Oundle Ward by-election were verified. I am sure you will join me in congratulating Charlie Best from the Liberal Democrats and welcome him to North Northamptonshire Council.

Please see the [declaration of result of polls](#) on our website.

## Results for Cottingham Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

Also today, the results of the Neighbourhood Planning Referendum for the Cottingham neighbourhood area were verified. The results were 93% in favour of a 'Yes' with 7% voting 'No'. The [referendum results](#) are on our website.

## Future of kerbside garden waste collections to be discussed by Executive

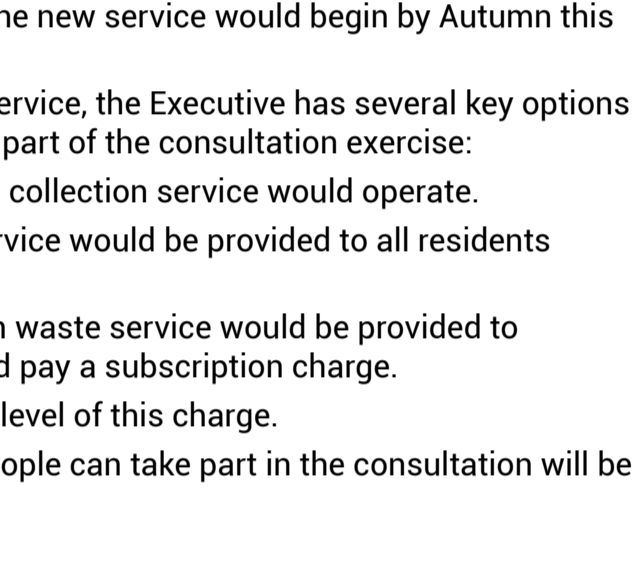
People in North Northamptonshire will be asked their views on the future collection of garden waste from their homes, if a report that is due to come to our Council's Executive is approved next week.

Following local government reorganisation last year, the new unitary Council has inherited different approaches to the fortnightly kerbside garden waste collections from its predecessor authorities. North Northamptonshire Council now wants to harmonise waste collection across the area, so all residents receive the same service. If agreed by Executive, a consultation would start in March with the results reported back to a meeting of the Executive in July. The new service would begin by Autumn this year.

To implement a harmonised kerbside garden waste service, the Executive has several key options and considerations which will need to be explored as part of the consultation exercise:

- To determine which months of the year a kerbside collection service would operate.
- To establish whether a universal garden waste service would be provided to all residents without an additional charge.
- To establish whether a subscription-based garden waste service would be provided to residents who wish to subscribe to the service and pay a subscription charge.
- And, if a subscription charge was to be levied, the level of this charge.

Subject to Executive approval, more details of how people can take part in the consultation will be made available soon.



## North Northamptonshire...right at your fingertips!

This Spring will see the launch of a brand-new mobile application and website to promote attractions, high street offers and other services across North Northamptonshire to help local residents and tourists discover the area, putting everything it has to offer right at their fingertips!

From shopping and eating out, to tourism, culture and the arts, 'DiscoverNN' will be a one-stop shop for people to plan days out at our beautiful tourist attractions, buy products and tickets whilst taking advantage of exclusive discounts, as well as see what's coming up in towns and villages, book tickets and get involved.

Funded through Government's Welcome Back Fund with the key aim to help boost and support local businesses, tourist attractions and our high streets, the app is being created in partnership with Bubltown, an experienced technology provider.

'DiscoverNN' is currently in the development stages with work happening to engage local businesses and attractions to join the app, which is completely free and another way to promote all they offer, sell products and services, and reach many new and existing customers directly.

Please do help spread the word amongst your networks and encourage people to discover more by contacting [DiscoverNN@NorthNorthants.gov.uk](mailto:DiscoverNN@NorthNorthants.gov.uk)

Look out for more news and information about this exciting initiative for North Northamptonshire Council – coming soon!



## Levelling Up project

North Northamptonshire Council has launched an online survey designed to identify any plans in the area that could access the Levelling Up Fund. Any bid submitted to the Levelling Up Fund can be a single, or a package of related (themed or geographically focused) projects, up to a value of £20m.

The Council is currently identifying potential projects which could be put forward through various steps, including an online survey to gather information about projects the Council may be previously unaware of. Projects must be capital (i.e. involve spend on a physical asset) and delivered by the end of March 2024 to support economic prosperity by investing in infrastructure projects.

The online survey is open and includes questions on description and purpose of project, what priority themes it covers, how it would align with local and national policy and priorities, amongst other key questions.

The Levelling Up Fund looks at projects across three key investment themes: transport, regeneration and town centre and cultural. We are looking for projects that come under any of these themes. It could be a smaller project, which could be put forward by the Council as part of a group of themed projects, or a large-scale project that will help to transform the local area and North Northamptonshire.

The survey is online now on [NNC Citizen Space](#) and will close this Sunday (20 February).



## New improvement board role will oversee improvement in county's Children's Services

In 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) appointed a Commissioner to oversee improvements to Children's Services at Northamptonshire whilst they prepared to transfer to an independent trust in 2020.

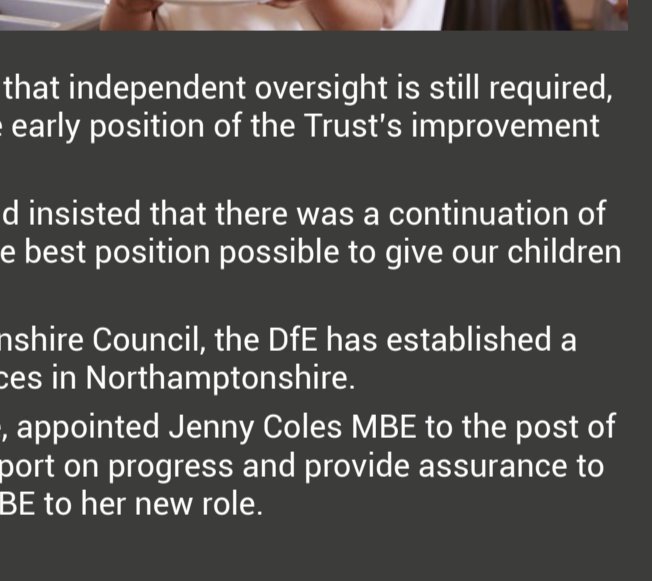
Last year, the Commissioner advised the Minister for Children and Families that he felt that sufficient progress had been demonstrated by the new Northamptonshire Children's Trust and that the role of commissioner was no longer required.

I welcome reports of positive improvement in the services provided by Northamptonshire's Children's Services. However, I am firmly of the view that independent oversight is still required, reflecting both the importance of the service and the early position of the Trust's improvement journey.

This is why we have worked with the Government and insisted that there was a continuation of this oversight role, so that Northamptonshire is in the best position possible to give our children and young people the best life chances in the future.

Following the concerns raised by North Northamptonshire Council, the DfE has established a new role to oversee improvement in Children's Services in Northamptonshire.

The Minister for Children and Families has, therefore, appointed Jenny Coles MBE to the post of Independent Improvement Board Chair, which will report on progress and provide assurance to Government. I would like to welcome Jenny Coles MBE to her new role.



## Celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in North Northants and further afield this summer

### Update from Clr Helen Howell

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism

I have the honour of sitting, as a representative of North Northamptonshire, on the Northamptonshire Platinum Jubilee Committee. The Committee is overseeing the preparations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

As you will be aware, communities across North Northamptonshire are being encouraged to get involved in a really holiday bonanza of special events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this summer. It is a bank holiday from the updates that come to the Committee just how involved and important parish and town councils are in connecting with their local communities.

Plans are underway to organise a packed weekend of activities across North Northamptonshire from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June, including official beacon-lighting ceremonies on Bank Holiday Thursday, a countywide Jubilee Pageant through Northampton on the Saturday, and a Big Picnic Lunch in the area on the Sunday.

If you have not made plans to get involved, there is still time to, whether it is planting a tree for the Jubilee (don't forget to register trees planted on the [Queen's Green Canopy Online Map](#), hosting a street party, a Big Picnic Lunch or lighting a beacon.

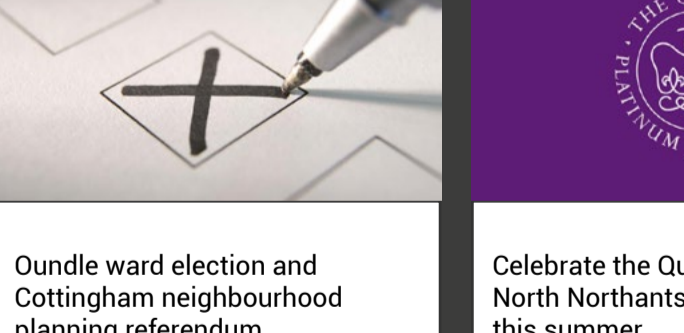
On the subject of beacons, we have been made aware of a Platinum Jubilee Gas-Fuelled 21CC Beacon that is on sale from a company called 21CC Group Ltd (telephone: 0131 331 4509 or email [beacons@21ccgroup.com](mailto:beacons@21ccgroup.com)). I have no idea how good they are but they certainly look the part. It will, of course, be a matter of choice and opinion as to how necessary such an item is, but it could be a good alternative to consider rather than lighting a large beacon fire.

Local community and voluntary groups can apply for a series of grants to help fund arts and sport projects commemorating the jubilee, including Arts Council England's [Let's Create Jubilee Fund](#) and [Sport England's Platinum Jubilee Activity Fund](#). In addition, initiatives including [The Queen's Green Canopy](#) tree planting project will create a lasting reminder of the Queen's Jubilee.

Please visit our [Queen's Platinum Jubilee web pages](#) for information on local events. Further information will be added over the coming weeks and months.

## Press releases

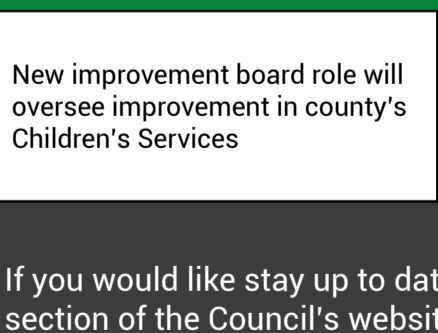
To help you stay abreast of the key things the Council has been doing, I have included some links to the Council's press releases below (starting with the most recent):



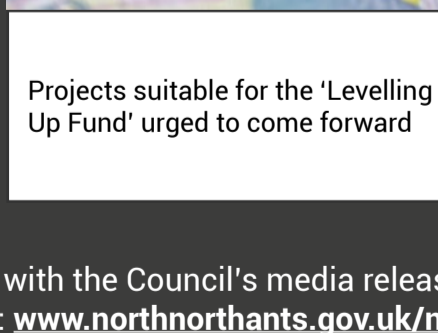
Amber storm warnings for North Northamptonshire



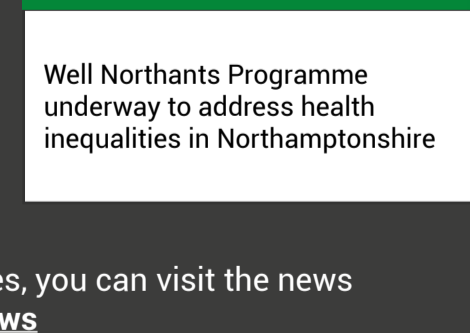
Future of kerbside garden waste collections to be discussed by Executive



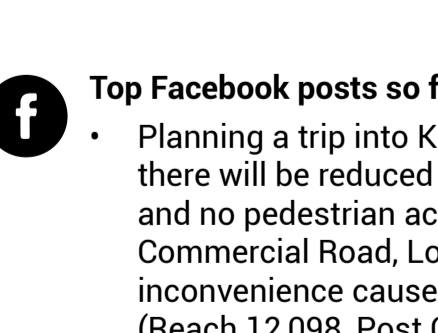
Oundle ward election and Cottingham neighbourhood planning referendum



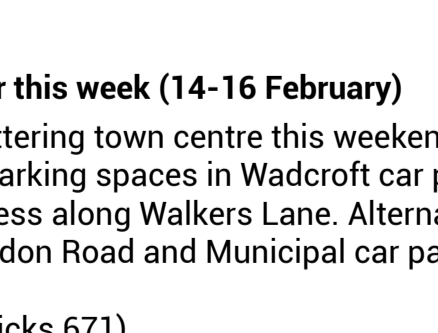
Celebrate the Queen's jubilee in North Northants and further afield this summer



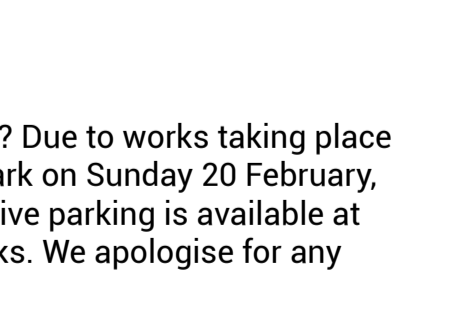
NNC works with partners to raise awareness of the impact of Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Awareness week



New improvement board role will oversee improvement in county's Children's Services



Projects suitable for the 'Levelling Up Fund' urged to come forward



Well Northants Programme underway to address health inequalities in Northamptonshire

If you would like stay up to date with the Council's media releases, you can visit the news section of the Council's website: [www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news)

Or follow Twitter [@NNNorthants](https://twitter.com/NNNorthants) and/or Facebook [@NorthNorthants](https://www.facebook.com/NorthNorthants)

## Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts on [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#).

### Top Facebook posts so far this week (14-16 February)

- Planning a trip into Kettering town centre this weekend? Due to works taking place there will be reduced parking spaces in Wadcroft car park on Sunday 20 February, and no pedestrian access along Walkers Lane. Alternative parking is available at Commercial Road, London Road and Municipal car parks. We apologise for any inconvenience caused. (Reach 12,098, Post Clicks 671)
- Future of kerbside garden waste collections to be discussed by Executive: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/futurekerbside-garden-waste-collections-be-discussed-executive>. (Reach 6,867, Post Clicks 662)
- Met Office warning issued for strong winds in north Northamptonshire as a result of Storm Dudley. Potential for winds gusting 60-70mph. Valid from 3pm tomorrow (Weds) until 6am Thursday. (Reach 4,267, Post Clicks 316)

### Top Tweets so far this week (14-16 February)

- If you live in Apethorpe and are planning to vote in the Oundle Ward by-election on Thursday, please note your polling station is: Woodnewton Village Hall, Orchard Lane, Woodnewton PE8 5EE. The change of polling station was due to the recent road closures. (Impressions 1,347, Engagements 28)
- Still not sorted that lunch time date? How about a coffee at a local cafe down your High Street? Support local businesses and (maybe) find love this #ValentinesDay (Impressions 650, Engagements 8)
- The Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is active from today (16 Feb 2022). If you do see someone sleeping rough in this cold weather, then please contact the team via 01536 464630 or email [roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk), (0300 126 3000 Out of Hours). (Impressions 615, Engagements 19)

## Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have ideas of items to include in future updates please let me know at: [executive@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:executive@northnorthants.gov.uk)

With Best Wishes,  
Jason